



WMMT FM Radio 88.7, the 24-Hour Voice of the Mountains Connects Appalachian Culture to the World

Name: WMMT FM 88.7,
Mountain Community Radio

Internet:
www.appalshop.org/wmmt/

Products/Services:
Web-based Radio

Location:
Whitesburg/Letcher County

Leadership: Cheryl Marshall,
General Manager
Jim Webb, Music Director
Suzanne Savell,
Traditional Music Coordinator
Rich Kirby,
Senior Producer and Resident
Old Time Music Artist
Pamela Shingler, Fundraising

Employees: 5

Founded: 1985

Reach: Regional/International

Innovative Insight:
"Maintain your focus on the service you provide. Enhance services through educational and community partnerships."

Way Internet Has Made You More Competitive:
"The Internet expands our sense of community with the world. It provides a tool to exchange vital information that will enhance the lives of remote and rural mountain communities."

Way to Maintain a Competitive Advantage:
"Provide a meaningful volunteer experience that encourages investment in the culture by providing opportunities for the development of local talent."

Whitesburg, Ky. — WMMT made its first broadcast on November 24, 1985. The radio station originated as a project of Appalshop, a federal War on Poverty program, to train disadvantaged Appalachian young people for jobs in the urban film and television industries. Rather than leave the area, trainees incorporated as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating opportunities for regional self-expression in an effort to preserve the culture of the Appalachian community.

The first words heard on WMMT were those of Nimrod Workman, a retired coal miner who started in the mines at age 12, left when he was 57, disabled with black lung disease. His songs were about the coal mines and the mountains.

In 2000, the 24-hour voice of the mountains became available to anyone with a computer via the Internet. Today it is undergoing a revolution that has expanded its reach from the desktop to wireless connectivity devices such as PDA's and cell phones. Unlike your traditional radio signal, Internet radio does not depend upon cloud formations or the position of the building for a clear signal because it is fed directly to your computer.

"We have listeners from Detroit, to Indianapolis, to Cincinnati, to California, said Cheryl Marshall, WMMT General Manager. "People who have left the region still want to hear the music and connect with the community. Audiences in England, Japan and Sweden are learning more about our history and our culture. Now that we have added the web-cast, we receive requests via email and through call-ins on a daily basis."

WMMT programming includes almost every style of music except classical, although it produces more traditional and bluegrass than any other station in the region, a place that gave birth to much of the music. In addition, WMMT's news and community affairs programming, produced by the station, deals with a broad range of economic, social and cultural issues.

Added Marshall, "for those that miss the sounds of home or those who just want to hear what is happening in other parts of the globe, Internet radio connects you to the world. To process the sound files all you need is a plug-in called an audio player. There are several free audio players available for download. On WMMT it is a quick click for Real Audio and the sounds of Appalachia are streaming into your home through your personal PC."

The folk music of the southern mountains is a vital and vibrant part of America's cultural heritage. With roots reaching to the British Isles and to Africa, mountain music has been lovingly handed down from one generation to the next.

From atop Mayking Peak of Pine Mountain at 3,485 feet above sea level, in a community with a population of 1,200, WMMT is an independent community radio station that flourishes with programming. It is run by a handful of dedicated staff and more than 50 community volunteers. "We have one volunteer who drives every other week from Tennessee, more than 100 miles one way, just to be a part of the broadcast. Others come from Ashland to share old-time music. From sunrise to sunset, almost everything we do is live. Our focus is to build a sense of community, providing entertainment and acting as community resource."

WMMT is listener supported radio and relies on donations to cover a large part of its operating costs. It operates on a budget with absolutely no frills. To find out more about WMMT call (606)633-0108 or visit their website.

About KY 120:

In the fast-paced world of technology-driven business, it should be recognized that best practices can be studied and emulated. As a part of the [connectkentucky](http://www.connectkentucky.org) initiative, CITE (Center for Technology Enterprise) is profiling business initiatives in each of Kentucky's 120 counties. For more information visit our Web site at www.connectkentucky.org or call 270.781.4320.